

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

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R 180930Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4509

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL MANDALAY

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 3630

E.O. 11652: GDSO

TAGS: PGOV,BM

SUBJECT: RESULTS OF EXTRAORDINARY PARTY CONGRESS

REF: RANGOON 3262 AND PREVIOUS

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE JUST-CONCLUDED BSPP EXTRAORDINARY PARTY CONGRESS CONFIRMED THE RESULTS OF THE RECENT PARTY PURGE AND ELECTED A NEW 250-MEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE. THE CONGRESS DEMONSTRATED ONCE AGAIN PRESIDENT NE WIN'S ABSOLUTE MASTERY OF THE BURMESE POLITICAL SCENE AND LEFT THE POSITION OF HIS NUMBER TWO, GENERAL SAN YU, AS AMBIGUOUS AS EVER. THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE HIGHLIGHTS THE GUB'S TREND TOWARD A MORE OVERTLY MILITARY COLORATION.  
END SUMMARY.

2. A NEW 250-MEMBER CENTRAL COMMITTEE WAS CHOSEN AT THE EXTRAORDINARY CONGRESS OF THE BURMA SOCIALIST PROGRAM PARTY (BSPP) HELD IN RANGOON NOVEMBER 14-17. THE NEWLY-ELECTED CENTRAL COMMITTEE REPLACES THE ONE INSTALLED AT THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS LAST MARCH, WHICH HAS BEEN SUBJECTED TO A FAIRLY EXTENSIVE PURGE OVER THE PAST FEW MONTHS. MOST OF  
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THOSE PURGED ROSE TO PROMINENCE AT THE THIRD CONGRESS, AND THE PRESENT EXTRAORDINARY MEETING WAS CONVENED TO RECTIFY THE MISTAKES OF THAT EARLIER CONGRESS, CONFIRM THE RESULTS OF THE PURGE, AND SELECT PARTY LEADERS MORE SATISFACTORY TO PRESIDENT NE WIN.

2. IN HIS REMARKS TO THE CONGRESS THE PRESIDENT REFERRED TO A

CLIQUE THAT HAD BEEN DISCOVERED WITH THE PARTY THAT WAS "DISREGARDING STATE AND PARTY INTERESTS IN FAVOR OF SELF INTERESTS." THE EXISTENCE OF THIS CLIQUE "HAS RESULTED IN THE NEED FOR CLEANSING THE PARTY, AND WE ARE NOW DOING IT," THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE DELEGATES. HE ALSO SAID THAT SOME MEMBERS OF THE CLIQUE WOULD BE PUNISHED ACCORDING TO LAW, I.E., FOR CORRUPTION, WHILE OTHERS WOULD BE PUNISHED THROUGH PARTY DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES, I.E., FOR PURELY POLITICAL SINS SUCH AS "FACTIONALISM," ETC. GOING INTO MORE DETAILS, GENERAL SAN YU ENDEAVORED TO EXPLAIN HOW "POLITICAL OPPORTUNISTS" HAD TRIED TO FORM FACTIONS, ABUSED THEIR POWER, AND DISRUPTED THE RESULTS OF THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS. THIS CREATED THE NEED, HE SAID, TO CONVENE AN EXTRAORDINARY PARTY CONGRESS TO CHANGE THE PARTY CONSTITUTION, SO AS TO ELECT A NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE ACCORDING TO "NEW PROCEDURES AND METHODS," AND TO RE-ESTABLISH PARTY UNITY.

3. IN THE NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE, PRESIDENT NE WIN AND GENERAL SAN YU RETAINED THE TOP TWO POSITIONS, AS EXPECTED. IN A DEPARTURE FROM PAST PROCEDURE, HOWEVER THE REST OF THE CENTRAL

COMMITTEE MEMBERS WERE LISTED ALPHABETICALLY. RATHER THAN BY RANK ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF VOTES THEY RECEIVED. ALSO, THE FORMER CATEGORY OF ALTERNATE CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER WAS ABOLISHED AND THE SIZE OF THE COMMITTEE WAS ENLARGED FROM 180 TO 250 MEMBERS. REPORTEDLY, THE DELEGATES WERE OFFERED A SLATE OF ONLY 250 CANDIDATES TO VOTE UPON, THUS ASSURING THE OUTCOME.  
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4. THE GUB'S RECENT TREND TOWARD A MORE OVERTLY MILITARY COLORATION WAS CONTINUE ON WITH 42 OF THE 74 NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS IDENTIFIED AS ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY OFFICERS. (ONLY 23 PERCENT OF THE FORMER CENTRAL COMMITTEE ARE SERVING OFFICERS.) MOREOVER, THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY OFFICERS ON THE

PARTY'S POWERFUL 15-MEMBER CENTRAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ROSE FROM FOUR TO SEVEN; AND NOW THERE IS ONLY ONE MEMBER WHO IS NOT A SERVING OR RETIRED MILITARY OFFICER.

5. PERHAPS THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL RESULT OF THE CONGRESS WAS THAT PRESIDENT NE WIN'S ABSOLUTE MASTERY OF THE BURMESE POLITICAL SCENE HAS ONCE AGAIN BEEN DEMONSTRATED. THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS,

SURPRISINGLY, PRODUCED A SITUATION NOT WHOLLY TO HIS LIKING; HE HAS NOW CHANGED THAT SITUATION, ESSENTIALLY BY FIAT BUT WITH ENOUGH ADROIT MANEUVER TO DEVELOP A SOLID CONSENSUS OF THE POWER STRUCTURE BEHIND HIM. IF THERE WERE EVER ANY DANGER OF HIS LOSING PERSONAL CONTROL OF THE PARTY, IT HAS NOW PASSED.

6. AS FOR GENERAL SAN YU, HIS POSITION REMAINS AS AMBIGUOUS AS

EVER. HE IS STILL OFFICIALLY NUMBER TWO, THE PRESUMED HEIR APPARENT; YET HE WAS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR ARRANGING THE THIRD PARTY CONGRESS WHICH SO DISPLEASED NE WINWO AND MANY OF THOSE PURGED SEEM TO HAVE BEEN HIS SUPPORTERS AND PROTEGES. HIS WINGS MAY HAVE BEEN CLIPPED AND WHAT LITTLE PERSONAL POWER HE HAD ERODED, BUT AFTER YEARS OF RUMORS ABOUT HIS POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES HE STILL ENDURES. TOTALLY DEPENDENT ON NE WIN FOR HIS POSITION, HE NEVERTHELESS SEEMS ABLE SOMEHOW TO SURVIVE APPARENT INSTANCES OF THE PRESIDENT'S DISPLEASURE WITH HIM.

7. WE HOPE TO PROVIDE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF THE CONGRESS AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE BURMESE POLITICAL SCENE IN A SUBSEQUENT MESSAGE WHEN MORE INFORMATION AND EDUCATED OPINION BECOMES AVAILABLE TO US.  
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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009